

# WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



Sep. 3, 2009

Vol. 51, No. 35

50¢

# Detroit workers resist budget cuts & layoffs

## Community group says pay workers, not banks

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire  
Detroit

Hundreds of city employees and community residents gathered Aug. 19 outside City Hall here to protest budget cuts. Newly elected interim Mayor Dave Bing has already placed over 300 workers on indefinite layoff and is preparing the public for the idling of another 1,000 employees in an effort to close a \$350-million deficit.

In addition to the layoffs, the mayor is set to make major cuts in bus services, the only source of transportation for hundreds of thousands of workers, students, people with disabilities and seniors. The Bing cuts would suspend bus transportation between 6 p.m. on Saturday and early Monday morning. Other possible cuts would eliminate several bus routes altogether.

The Aug. 19 demonstration was largely organized by the city bus drivers' union—Amalgamated Transit Local 26. Other unions involved included American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 207 as well as rank-and-file members of United Auto Workers Local 2334 and the Detroit Federation of Teachers.

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Members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs carried banners calling for Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm to declare an economic state of emergency and place a halt on home seizures and energy cuts to individual households.

Public hearings the week of Aug. 24 will allow city residents to voice their opinions on the proposed cutbacks and elimination of bus service routes. With rising unemployment and poverty rates in the city of Detroit, the scaling down and termination of routes would be disastrous for the city's overwhelming majority of African-American and working class residents.

### Severity of crisis deepens

Despite government and corporate claims that the economy is beginning to show signs of a recovery, conditions in the state of Michigan are becoming more desperate for workers and youth as well as small business owners.



Detroit city workers tell City Hall: 'Hands off our jobs!'

WW PHOTO KRIS HAMEL

## FIGHTING CAPITALIST GREED

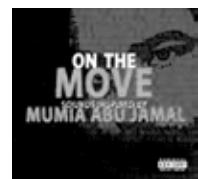
- The rotten Mellons
- UAW workers in California
- NYC infrastructure crumbles
- Minneapolis sit-ins vs. eviction



## REPRESSION & THE STATE



- Peltier parole denied
- Killer Keller
- Mumia CD released



## Afghans opt out of phony election

By John Catalinotto

The fraud-filled and inconclusive Afghan presidential election exposed the weakness of the U.S.-NATO occupation regime. President Barack Obama's defense of the phony election and of the U.S. intervention failed to cover this up at a time when the people in the U.S. are growing increasingly unhappy with the Afghan war.

The top Pentagon brass admit to weaknesses of the occupation and the Afghan puppet regime, but do so in order to make the case for more U.S. troops. The generals are putting the administration in the position of taking responsibility for a U.S. defeat if it doesn't send more youths to kill and die in Central Asia.

No election under foreign occupation can be considered "fair." It is automati-

cally a violation of that nation's sovereignty to have foreign troops presiding over polling places. But Afghanistan's Aug. 20 presidential election was corrupt from every angle.

The Taliban-led resistance forces opposed participation in what they rightfully considered a foreign-imposed election. In the many areas under control of the resistance, voting was minimal. "In a broad southern region—provinces like Kandahar, Helmand, Oruzgan and Zabul—turnout was as low as 5 percent to 10 percent, [a Western] official said, effectively disenfranchising the region viewed as the most crucial" in the latest U.S. offensive. (New York Times, Aug. 22)

In provinces where the resistance is weaker, local military figures—usually called "warlords" in the Western media—Continued on page 8

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Organizers signed up to build the Jobs March during a Block Party in Pittsburgh on Aug. 22.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK



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Vol. 51, No. 35 • Sept. 3, 2009

Closing date: Aug. 25, 2009

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994.

Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at [www.workers.org/email.php](http://www.workers.org/email.php).

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

# Injustice continues: Leonard Peltier denied parole



By Mahtowin

A wave of outrage swept the progressive community worldwide at the news that Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier was denied parole on Aug. 21. The U.S. government said Peltier will not be eligible for another parole hearing until 2024, when he will be 79 years old.

Peltier, framed up by the FBI for the 1975 shooting of two FBI agents at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, has been unjustly imprisoned since 1976. He is an international symbol of the U.S. government's refusal to respect Native nations and sovereignty and a symbol of the corruption of the U.S. criminal "justice" system.

But Peltier is not just a symbol. He is "ikce wicasa," the Lakota phrase meaning "human being." He has been held captive for more than 12,000 days—six years longer than South Africa's Nelson Mandela was imprisoned.

The feds have tried to have Peltier assassinated in prison. He has been put in solitary confinement countless times. He is currently imprisoned in Lewisburg, Pa., far from his family and his reservation. Peltier, now 64, grows increasingly ill from diabetes, vision and prostate problems, and other medical issues. Like all prisoners, he receives inadequate medical care.

Peltier's children have grown up without him, and he has never been able to hold his grandchildren. He longs to walk the land and see the night sky, to eat a meal of his own choosing, to gather with

his family and friends, to live among his people once more. Peltier, a man whose only crime has been to fight for Native rights and sovereignty, languishes in prison solely because of the dishonesty and arrogance of the U.S. government and its Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Despite everything, Peltier's spirit is not crushed. His supporters cannot allow themselves to be discouraged. Peltier depends upon his supporters to transmute our outrage into action and educate others about his case.

The Leonard Peltier Defense/Offense Committee is considering its next steps, and meanwhile it wishes "to thank our thousands of supporters for their tenacious efforts, in particular during the months leading to Leonard's recent parole hearing. Currently we are in the process of finalizing plans for efforts around exercising our right to challenge this decision, advocating for intervention by President Barack Obama, and succeeding in getting both proper medical attention for Leonard and a transfer to a federal prison closer to home. We will be issuing directives within the near future."

*For more information on Peltier's case and the struggle to free him, visit [www.wholeonardpeltier.info](http://www.wholeonardpeltier.info). Cards and letters may be sent to Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, USP-Lewisburg, P.O. Box 1000, Lewisburg, PA 17837.*

*Mahtowin is co-leader of United American Indians of New England.*

## Statement of Peltier's attorney

*Following are excerpts from an Aug. 21 statement released by Eric Seitz, a defense attorney for Leonard Peltier:*

Despite judicial determinations that the unrepentant FBI fabricated evidence and presented perjured testimony in Leonard Peltier's prosecution; despite a jury's acquittal on grounds of self-defense of two co-defendants who were found to have engaged in the same conduct of which Mr. Peltier was convicted; despite Mr. Peltier's exemplary record during his incarceration for more than 33 years and his clearly demonstrated eligibility for parole; despite letters and petitions calling for his release submitted by millions of people in this country and around the world including one of the judges who ruled on his earlier appeals; and despite his advanced age and deteriorating health, the Parole Commission today informed Mr. Peltier that his "release on parole would depreciate the seriousness of your offenses and would promote disrespect for the law," and set a reconsideration hearing in July 2024.

This is the extreme action of the same law enforcement community that brought us the indefinite imprisonment of suspected teenage terrorists; tortures and killings in CIA prisons around the world. ... These are the same institutions that have never treated Indigenous peoples with dignity or respect or accepted any responsibility for centuries of intolerance and abuse.

At his parole hearing on July 28, Leonard Peltier expressed regret and accepted responsibility for his role in the incident in which the two FBI agents and one Native American activist died as the result of a shootout on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Mr. Peltier emphasized that the shootout occurred in circumstances where there literally was a war going on between corrupt tribal leaders, supported by the government, on the one hand, and Native American traditionalists and young activists, on the other.

He again denied—as he has always denied—that he intended the deaths of anyone or that he fired the fatal shots that killed the two agents, and he reminded the hearing officer that one of his former co-defendants recently admitted to having fired the fatal shots himself.

Accordingly, it is not true that Leonard Peltier participated in "the execution style murders of two FBI agents," as the Parole Commission asserts, and there never has been credible evidence of Mr. Peltier's responsibility for the fatal shots, as the FBI continues to allege.

Moreover, given the corrupt practices of the FBI, ... it is entirely untrue that Leonard Peltier's parole at this juncture will in any way "depreciate the seriousness" of his conduct and/or "promote disrespect for the law."

We will continue to seek parole and clemency for Mr. Peltier and to eventually bring this prolonged injustice to a ... fair resolution. □

## Artists demand: 'Free Mumia!'

New York—On Aug. 21 the Solidarity Center here was filled with five hours of inspiring sounds: music and spoken word from talented artists (photo right) brought together to support the case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, known worldwide as the "voice of the voiceless."

Black WAXX Recordings and Artists and Activists United for Peace organized the celebration to officially release a powerful two-disc CD called "On the Move—Sounds Inspired by Mumia Abu-Jamal." It aims to help raise broader awareness of the political significance of Mumia's case and why he should be set free immediately after spending more than 27 years on Pennsylvania's death row. Throughout the evening, the audience clapped, sang, cried and chanted during the performances.

Some of the artists who lent their voices to the CD—such as Nana Soul, Stephanie Rice, SoSoon, Maya Azucena, Spiritchild, Latisha Devine, Melinda Davis and others—gave live performances. The acclaimed, legendary film director Melvin Van Peebles and Pam Africa from International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal gave special remarks. U-Savior Washington, a film director and a producer of the CD, presided over the program.

August 21 has been designated "Black August" because on this day, 38 years ago, Soledad Brother and Black Panther Party leader George Jackson was assassinated by prison guards in San Quentin prison.

To order the CD, e-mail [info@blackwaxx.com](mailto:info@blackwaxx.com).

—Report & photo by Monica Moorehead



## Highest criminal judge in Texas on trial

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Texas already had a reputation for executing death row prisoners at a rate unparalleled anywhere else in the United States.

But progressive activists, attorneys, judges and legal ethicists did a double-take on Sept. 25, 2007, when Texas' highest criminal judge responded to a plea for 20 extra minutes to file an appeal for a prisoner set for execution at 6 p.m. that evening with "Tell them we close at 5."

Judge Sharon "Killer" Keller, as she has been nicknamed by death penalty opponents, arrogantly thought that the life of Michael Richard did not matter. She had left work at the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals early that afternoon to meet a

repair person at her home. She got a call at home saying Richard's attorneys were having computer problems and needed a few more minutes.

Her response of "we close at 5" is likely to end her judicial career.

That morning the U.S. Supreme Court had effectively suspended lethal injection as a manner of execution by accepting a challenge to its constitutionality in a Kentucky case.

Richard was executed a few hours later because, without the Texas high court ruling on his appeal, his lawyers could not appeal his case any further. His was the last execution in the U.S. until the U.S. high court ruled in April 2008 that the procedures in Kentucky were not cruel and unusual. There was a de facto moratorium on executions in the U.S. for more

than seven months.

Judge Keller was in court this August, but this time she was the defendant. The Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct had filed six charges against her for unethical behavior and bringing disgrace to the judicial process.

On Aug. 17, the first day of trial, dozens of death penalty activists protested outside the Bexar County Courthouse in San Antonio, using amplified sound which echoed off the courthouse to proclaim that Judge Keller should be immediately removed from the bench and disbarred.

"Because of her arbitrary decision not to stay open to accept the appeal of death row prisoner Michael Richard, which she made in violation of her own court's rules and without consulting the other judges on the court, Keller should be removed

from office," Scott Cobb, president of the Texas Moratorium Network, said on the bullhorn.

The demonstration attracted media coverage from CNN, the New York Times, the Washington Post and the BBC as well as all major Texas media.

During opening arguments, attorneys for both sides tried to convince the reporters, attorneys, bloggers, law students and anti-death penalty activists packing the courtroom that the trial of Judge Keller was not a debate on the death penalty.

But Hooman Hedayati, a leader of Texas Students Against the Death Penalty (TSADP) in Austin, told the news media, "By her actions, Keller has herself made this a debate on the death penalty. She did not follow the execution day procedures

*Continued on page 10*

## The Mellons

# Blood, oil and profits

By Stephen Millies

The Mellon fortune drips with blood and oil from every pore.

Gulf Oil Corp. became the biggest gusher of money for the Mellon family empire. By 1956 it was taking \$160 million annually in profits out of Kuwait alone.

Violence was a vital ingredient of this stolen wealth. President Barack Obama admitted in his June 4th Cairo speech that "the United States played a role in the overthrow of a democratically elected Iranian government."

The CIA's "Operation Ajax" overthrew Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953. It was masterminded by CIA executive Kermit Roosevelt, a grandson of President Teddy Roosevelt. Mossadegh's "crime" was nationalizing his country's oil.

Iran was plunged into 26 years of dictatorship under the U.S.-imposed Shah. Thousands were tortured to death by the SAVAK secret police, which was modeled on the Nazi Gestapo. SAVAK agents were trained by Herman Norman Schwarzkopf, whose son, Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., led the 1991 U.S. invasion of Iraq.

This was wonderful for the Mellons, since Gulf Oil got a slice of Iranian oil. Kermit Roosevelt left the CIA and became a Gulf Oil vice president.

As in 1953, the U.S. is once again trying to overthrow a "democratically elected Iranian government." Congress has approved \$400 million for a new CIA destabilization campaign.

U.S. billionaires want to overthrow Iranian President Ahmadinejad, just like

they got rid of Prime Minister Mossadegh.

### It started in Texas

Croatian immigrant Anthony Lucas was convinced there was oil under an East Texas salt dome. Native people had known this for centuries.

Vindication came on Jan. 10, 1901, when the Spindletop gusher began throwing 100,000 barrels of oil into the sky every day. Nearby Beaumont became a boomtown.

The prospector—whose original name was Luchich—was forced to sell seven-eighths of his stake to Pittsburgh oilmen J.M. Guffey and John H. Galey. These oilmen needed more financing from the biggest Pittsburgh monied-lenders—the Mellons.

The J.M. Guffey Petroleum Co. was born with a \$15 million capitalization. Lucas—who was a classmate of Serbian electrical genius Nikola Tesla—got \$400,000. Galey got something. The workers who risked their lives to put out a huge oil fire at Spindletop got nothing.

Guffey was kicked out by the Mellons in 1907 when Gulf Oil was incorporated. Andrew Mellon's nephew, William Larimer Mellon, was installed as Gulf's president.

He had organized the Crescent pipeline, which stretched across Pennsylvania. The Mellons sold it to the Rockefellers' National Transit pipeline in 1895 for \$4 million.

W.L. Mellon then organized a Pittsburgh streetcar monopoly in 1901 valued at \$110 million. The Mellons were big into trolleys at that time, since it served their real estate interests.

Big Oil later spent decades destroying trolley systems in the interests of pro-

### PART 4

moting the use of gas-guzzling automobiles. The 700-mile-long Pacific Electric system that once served the Los Angeles area shut down its last line to Long Beach in 1961.

### Killing people around the world

Gulf Oil's pipelines extended into Sapulpa, Okla., where oil was stolen from Native people. The prosperous Greenwood neighborhood in nearby Tulsa—called "Black Wall Street"—was destroyed by white racist mobs in 1921, with hundreds of African Americans killed.

The Gulf Oil refinery at Port Arthur, Texas, became the largest in the world in the 1920s. Black and Mexican workers did the dirtiest work there and got only 25 cents per hour.

Twenty-five sailors burned to death when the company's tanker "Gulf of Venezuela" blew up in Port Arthur in 1926.

By this time Gulf had plenty of oil wells in Venezuela. The Mellons and Rockefellers backed Juan Vicente Gómez, who was the country's dictator from 1908 until his death in 1935.

Gómez crushed unions and threw student protesters into chain gangs. Presently, democratically elected Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frías, with Cuban assistance, has brought health care to millions. Yet the corporate media that today attack President Chávez never even mentioned the dictator Gómez.

Gulf Oil was exploiting Mexico before it began ripping off Venezuela. But the Mellons didn't like one important anti-imperialist result of the Mexican Revolution. In 1938 all the U.S. and British oil companies were thrown out of that country.

Colombia's congress rejected concessions to Gulf and Standard Oil in 1928. Mellon lawyer Allen Dulles—who later was to be the CIA head during Mossadegh's overthrow—was outraged. Colombia was forced to back down when its credit was shut off by Wall Street.

Gen. René Barrientos Ortuño staged a phony 1966 election in Bolivia with \$800,000 in Gulf Oil bribes. The next year he and the CIA assassinated the heroic revolutionary, Che Guevara.

But Big Oil has now been kicked out of Bolivia.

Next the Mellons went to the Middle East and Africa. U.S. Ambassador to Britain Andrew Mellon demanded and got half of Kuwait's oil deposits from its colonial overlords in London.

Gulf Oil was the paymaster for the Portuguese fascist regime's war against the African people of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

But African liberation fighters won independence for these countries and their victories also aided the successful struggle against fascism by the Portuguese workers, who overthrew dictator Marcelo Caetano in 1974.

What did working people in Pittsburgh get out of Gulf Oil's crimes?

When Gulf Oil was taken over by Chevron in 1984, thousands of jobs were lost at its skyscraper headquarters in Pittsburgh. Mellon foundation grants to Carnegie-Mellon University didn't stop 500 Gulf Oil scientists from being fired.

Sources: "Mellon's Millions" by Harvey O'Connor and "Paul Mellon: Portrait of an Oil Baron" by William S. Hoffman.

Next week: Mellon's aluminum monopoly

## From new intro to 'High Tech, Low Pay'

# Does present crisis compare to Great Depression?

*Here is our fourth installment of excerpts from a new introduction to the ground-breaking work "High Tech, Low Pay." The book, written by Sam Marcy during the early stages of capitalist restructuring and first published in 1986, has long been out of print and will soon be reissued. Fred Goldstein, who wrote this introduction, is author of "Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay."*

Many comparisons are made between the present crisis and the Great Depression. But while the depression of the 1930s is fully known, the present crisis is in its early stages and has yet to be played out. Many specifics cannot be known at this point. It is best from a Marxist point of view, i.e., from a materialist standpoint, to focus on what can be studied right now.

What can be compared are the historic periods leading up to the depression of the 1930s and later to the present cri-

sis, which began with the collapse of the housing bubble in 2007. These periods can be effectively compared.

### From Civil War to Great Depression

In the first crisis, the economic forces that drove U.S. capitalism forward in the 70 years from the U.S. Civil War to the world depression of the 1930s had exhausted themselves. They were no longer able to stimulate any significant capitalist revival during the entire decade from 1929 to 1939. No economic means could bring back capitalist prosperity.

What were those forces? The Indigenous nations had finally been driven from all their lands. The so-called "frontier" had been occupied, including the half of Mexico that was annexed to become the Southwest of the United States. After the Civil War the African-American popula-

tion of the South had again been subjugated, this time into a state of semi-slavery through the sharecropping system. The railroad boom had run its course. Imperialist expansion in the so-called Spanish-American War of 1898 had brought Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines into the U.S. empire, along with Samoa and Hawaii. U.S. businesses had pushed deeper into China and Latin America.

Profits rolled in from World War I and helped sustain the system for a period. There was rapid expansion of the auto industry, the electrification of the country and mass production of appliances. But by the late 1920s the expansion had led to overproduction. Massive credit and land speculation led to a crash in real estate and the stock market crash in 1929.

These were the forces that drove capitalism for 70 years after the Civil War. Once they were exhausted, the system

went into a state of absolute decline and could only be revived by war preparations and, finally, World War II itself.

It took 15 million U.S. soldiers under arms and an emergency regime of total war production to alleviate mass unemployment in the U.S. It took the deaths of 50 million people or more and the destruction of factories, mines, ports, railroads, bridges and residential buildings throughout Europe and Asia to overcome the pre-war economic crisis and put capitalism back on its feet.

### From World War II to 2007

A review of the situation leading up to the present crisis bears an ominous resemblance to that which preceded the Great Depression. Namely, the forces that have propelled U.S. capitalism and the development of the means of production

*Continued on page 10*

*"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, irrational, and prone to intermittent crises, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein's Low-Wage Capitalism does exactly that."*

— Howard Zinn

The author is available for lectures and interviews. Review online at [LowWageCapitalism.com](http://LowWageCapitalism.com). Available at bookstores nationally, or order from Leftbooks.com

# Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Colossus with feet of clay:  
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

A timely new book by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval, the end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital. The analysis rests on three basic developments in the last three decades:

- The world's workforce available to exploitation by transnational capitalist corporations doubled in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe.
- The technological revolutions of the digital age, in both production and communications, have allowed transnational corporations to destroy high-wage jobs and simultaneously expand the global workforce to generate a worldwide wage competition.
- The decline in the economic condition of the workers, driven by the laws of capitalism and the capitalist class, is leading to the end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

## Sickness & struggle

# Soviet medicine— a workers' health plan

By David Hoskins

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution overthrew capitalist property relations, smashed the Russian state and brought a workers' party to power for the first time in history. This historic achievement by the working class laid the foundation for the formation of the Soviet Union and the subsequent socialist construction efforts.

The revolution brought with it the radical reorganization of society, including agriculture, industry, education and medical care. The elimination of usury in the countryside and collectivization of agriculture was accomplished alongside rapid industrialization in the cities.

The modernization of health care facilities and the establishment of a comprehensive system of free universal health care accompanied these broader economic developments.

Soviet health care provided for local hospitals, factory clinics, industrial hygiene programs and neighborhood polyclinics at no cost to the patient. The Soviet system was recognized for the great strides it made in battling infectious diseases—such as tuberculosis and typhus fever—which had periodically ravaged workers and peasants in czarist Russia.

In 1932 Sir Arthur Newsholme, former principal medical officer of the Local Government Board of England and Wales, and John Adams Kingsbury, former com-

missioner of public charities for the City of New York, traveled to the Soviet Union to examine firsthand that country's socialist health care system. Their observations were published in 1933 as "Red Medicine: Socialized Health in Soviet Russia."

Their trip to the Soviet Union and the publication of their findings took place at a time when workers in the United States and Western Europe were suffering terrible unemployment and hardship in the midst of the Great Depression.

Newsholme and Kingsbury preface their work with this statement: "When a Russian becomes ill the Government does something about it. In fact, Government has already done something about it, for Soviet Russia has decided that the health of the individual is the concern of society as a whole. Indeed, the Soviet Union is the one na-

tion in the world which has undertaken to set up and operate a complete organization designed to provide preventive and curative medical care for every man, woman, and child within its borders."

This sweeping opening statement is backed by the account of their voyage across the Soviet Union. The class character of the new Soviet state was also apparent in the rights gained by workers and other formerly exploited classes to access a number of programs and facilities designed to promote longevity and healthy living. Sports and cultural clubs,

## PART 3

groups for dancing and singing, and parks and gardens for recreation were all made available with priority for workers and poor peasants.

Similar improvements were noted in access to quality medical facilities. The revolution saw the confiscation of the palaces and magnificent homes of the pre-revolution aristocracy. Many of these grand estates were converted by the Soviet state into sanatoria and rest homes for ill and disabled workers in need of medical assistance and peaceful recuperation.

Modern hospitals and clinics were constructed and equipped with the most recent medical technology. These facilities were staffed with highly competent doctors and nurses with an orientation toward providing medical care as a right, not a means to making profit.

The authors described the great gains made by women as a result of the revolution. Equal pay was given for equal work with no distinction between men and women in sickness insurance benefits. Public laundries, dining centers and nurseries freed women from household bondage and paved the way for fuller participation in industrial and political activities.

Women's health benefits were supplemented with maternity benefits which provided for full wages during absence from work and money allowances to mothers on leave to nurse their infants.

In 1920 the Soviet government had repealed existing laws against abortion and established guidelines for the procedure—the first country to do so. Abortions were largely performed free of charge by licensed surgeons in state hospitals with a division for that specific purpose.

In their chapter on Russian medical history and health care training, Newsholme and Kingsbury point out that, "Prior to the Revolution, Russia was extremely backward in its medical provision for the mass of the people. Since that time a vast advance has been made [and] the wide sweep of the newly organized medicine of Russia presents features from which other countries may derive important lessons."

The progress made by the Soviet Union in devising a real workers' health plan experienced a partial deterioration later as Cold War pressures strained the Soviet economy and bureaucratic privilege became entrenched. However, these setbacks were minimal compared to the full-blown health crisis that was forced on the workers with the dissolution of the socialist system and the return to capitalism.

The counterrevolutions that swept across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from 1989 to 1991 and restored capitalist property relations also reversed the gains workers had made in health care. The 1991 defeat of the Soviet Union presaged a widespread health care crisis in Russia and other former Soviet republics.

A report published earlier this year in the British medical journal *The Lancet* detailed the toll capitalist restoration has taken on the health of workers. The report, "Mass privatization and the post-communist mortality crisis: a cross-national analysis," was prepared by bourgeois academics at some of Britain's most prestigious universities. These researchers discovered that health standards in Russia and Eastern Europe had plummeted in proportion to the degree of capitalist reintroduction.

In capitalist Russia, the death rate of working adults rose by 18 percent and the average life expectancy fell by five years. The death rate overall for Russia and Kazakhstan increased by 42 percent in the early 1990s. The United Nations estimates that, in all, the deaths of 10 million people can be attributed to the transition away from socialism.

*Next: U.S. health reform struggle during the turbulent 1960s.*

# Larouche is no 'socialist'

By Caleb T. Maupin

The corporate media is doing another disservice to real socialists and communists by mislabeling Lyndon Larouche as a "communist" or "socialist," as his followers attack and disrupt health care reform meetings. These activities add a new chapter to this group's reactionary history, abetted by misrepresentation in the corporate media.

Larouche's gang has stood outside "town hall" meetings holding pictures of Obama with a Hitler-style mustache and the words "I've changed." The media have attempted to use Larouche's behavior to attack the left. When covering the rightist attacks on health care proposals, several newspapers and television programs have identified Larouche's followers and their despicable sign as "communist," "socialist" and "leftist." Such claims are a great falsehood and distortion of reality.

Larouche has a long record of serving the capitalist ruling class by attacking progressive movements. Anyone who knows the real history of the left can identify his political philosophy and teaching as dripping with racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and bigotry against lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

It is true that back in the late 1960s Larouche was identified with a tendency that was briefly part of the left, but it soon switched to the opposite side of the class struggle. By the mid-1970s it was obvious to anyone on the left in the U.S. that he was no socialist or communist.

This became apparent in the early 1970s when his group launched what it called "Operation Mop-Up," in which his followers violently attacked meetings of

leftist and Marxist groups, especially the Communist Party USA, with lead pipes, chains and other makeshift weapons.

In 1973 Larouche mobilized a campaign against revolutionary poet Amiri Baraka, using not political arguments but slandering the African-American political/cultural leader and, in a viciously racist act, put a caricature of Baraka's face on the body of a hyena on the front page of a pamphlet published by his newspaper, the misnamed New Solidarity. The Ku Klux Klan and other fascist organizations joined his group's demonstrations against Baraka.

Most people on the left consider him a neo-fascist, although he never had the kind of mass following that groups like the openly racist Ku Klux Klan or the White Citizens Council could claim at some points in their history.

In 1986 Larouche's publishing house openly published and distributed the writings of a Nazi general named Frederick August Freiherr von der Heyd. This book, the first English translation of his work, had an introduction by Larouche himself.

During the AIDS crisis, Larouche said he supported the "accelerated death" of people with AIDS in order to "cleanse" the country of the disease. He also praised European skinhead gangs that randomly murdered LGBT people. (New Solidarity,

## Correction

The headline "Interview with Healthcare-NOW's Ajamu Sankofa" in the Aug. 27 issue of *WW* was incorrect. As the article correctly said, Sankofa is a former national organizer with Healthcare-NOW who recently co-founded the Private Health Insurance Must Go Coalition. □

Feb. 9, 1987)

Larouche put himself on the same side as the nuclear energy industry by organizing the Fusion Energy Foundation, a group that attacked those who opposed nuclear power and that was used by the power corporations to promote their products around the world. Larouche also publicized and championed Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, popularly known as "Star Wars."

Larouche and his tactics of bigoted fear-mongering and senseless violence are the opposite of what communists, socialists and leftists stand for.

Don't be fooled by the capitalist media, which are only too ready to try to discredit real communists and socialists. □

## WW articles on the BIG CRASH

What is behind the devastating onslaught on workers' jobs and homes? This compilation of articles from Workers World, beginning in 2006, analyzes the developing worldwide economic crisis and provides strategies for a fight-back movement against the corporations and banks.

### 2006:

- Is \$10 trillion housing bubble ready to burst?

### 2007:

- Housing market falls—Foreclosures kill the dream
- Crisis on Wall Street - Banks bail out hedge funds
- Housing crisis spreads to prime mortgages
- Mortgage crisis and inequality: More than managers are at fault
- Capitalist credit crisis: How banks take homes, jobs from workers
- Bush lets banks write rules for mortgage relief

### 2008:

- Globalization, economic crisis & Obama
- April 16 mortgage protest set: Bail out people, not bankers!
- Digging below the surface of this crisis
- Failing banks line up for government handouts
- Workers, banks and the credit crisis
- Handout to rich ignites anger—Fight for a workers' program to save jobs, homes!
- What will YOU do about the worst capitalist crisis since the 1930s?
- The housing crisis and a fight-back program

### Including in 2009:

- Capitalist state wages war on UAW
- Capitalist bosses plan permanent job loss
- Los Angeles activists mobilize: 'We're in a state of emergency'
- Fear and loathing at AIG: Why bailouts are no answer to the crisis
- Women lead foreclosure struggles
- Youth say: We deserve a better system
- What could be done with \$10 trillion

# California autoworkers fight to save jobs

By Joan Marquardt  
Fremont, Calif.

Several hundred rank-and-file United Auto Workers, family members, union leaders and a handful of local and state elected officials, community and business people rallied Aug. 20 outside the UAW Local 2244 hall here.

Directly across a busy highway was the sprawling, 380-acre plant of New United Motors Manufacturing Inc., a joint venture between General Motors and Toyota. Some 4,700 autoworkers are fighting to save their jobs and their plant.

A union leaflet building for the rally to save the 25-year-old plant stated: "Help save NUMMI jobs! Support our local economy! Save thousands of jobs! We need your participation!"

The workers have been struggling to keep their jobs since June when GM coldly announced it was terminating its 50-50 partnership with Toyota. NUMMI had been one of the most productive auto plants going.

Despite a \$50-billion government bailout of GM, paid for by U.S. workers and taxpayers, the company's strategy is to spread the massive layoffs and plant closings that have devastated the Midwest.

The NUMMI autoworkers have every reason to be angry. They are in a fighting mood to keep the Toyota production jobs they still have. GM production was less than one-fourth the total NUMMI plant output when the very last GM car—a Pontiac Vibe—rolled off the as-

sembly line on Aug. 17.

Toyota Corolla orders are piling up thanks to the federal cash-for-clunkers rebate plan. California drivers already account for the most Toyota sales in North America, and now more Californians than ever want compact Corollas. So why does NUMMI want to lay the workers off?

## Unemployment above 10 percent

The UAW rally took place just as the latest local, state and national officially recognized unemployment numbers were released. California is one of 15 states and the District of Columbia where the current jobless rate is higher than 10 percent of the "counted" workforce.

At 11.9 percent, California is tied with Oregon for fourth place, ranked behind Michigan at 15 percent, Rhode Island at 12.7 percent and Nevada at 12.5 percent. The July figures are the highest they have ever been since California started keeping such records in 1976.

The NUMMI autoworkers are well aware that jobs have been lost for the last 20 consecutive months in the East Bay communities where Fremont is situated. Making it worse, the race and ethnic identity of the growing ranks of the unemployed are of concern to the multinational NUMMI workforce. Official California



WW PHOTO: JOAN MARQUARDT

Bail Out the People Movement distributed a leaflet pledging all-out support that was received warmly by UAW members.

figures show that statewide 14.2 percent of African-American, 12.7 percent of Latino/a and 9.5 percent of white workers are now jobless. The figures speak volumes about the continued racism throughout the state.

As if the jobs already lost weren't enough, to add 4,700 NUMMI autoworkers and some 20,000 to 30,000 workers at auto parts suppliers and related industries in the area to the ranks of the unemployed would be catastrophic. NUMMI is currently the largest private employer in Alameda County.

The rally also highlighted the fact that UAW Local 2244 is in contract negotiations with NUMMI. The most recent contract ran out earlier this month. In these discussions the company is undoubtedly hoping to hear what the union membership may be willing to give up to keep the NUMMI plant open. Local and state elected officials are trying to put together

incentives that Toyota will find too good to turn down.

The local is meeting on Aug. 23—no doubt to discuss the future of the NUMMI plant. Other auto industry workers have faced bankruptcy, sale, closure and shutdown by owners and employers. Many others have waged heroic struggles in defense of their right to their current jobs or to a new job at good wages, so they can have affordable health care, pensions, live in a home or apartment, and educate themselves and their children.

At the Republic Windows & Doors factory in Chicago, members of the United Electrical Workers successfully occupied the factory to keep their jobs. And Bakery Workers Local 50 at the Stella D'Oro Biscuit Co. plant in New York City had to go out on strike for a whole year before the National Labor Relations Board ruled against the company's unfair practices.

These victories were only possible because of the solidarity between the workers and the community. A win for one is a win for many other workers, underemployed or unemployed, and inspires an organized fightback against business owners and their banks that have profited for so long from the labor of the workforce. □

# Things fall apart as NYC skimps on infrastructure

By G. Dunkel  
New York

It was 10:30 p.m. on Aug. 16 when the ceiling finally collapsed at the 181st Street subway station on New York's 1 line. Bricks fell 35 feet onto the tracks, hitting and severely damaging a train that was in the station. Fortunately, nobody was injured.

While the human drama of being in a subway while tons of bricks crashed down on it is clear, none of the New York press interviewed any passengers or the train's crew. They followed the Metropolitan Transit Authority's approach of treating this Sunday evening near-tragedy as a mere interruption of service.

It is indeed a significant service interruption. About 600,000 people use the 1 line every workday—more than use the entire transit system in Boston. About 75,000 people use the stations directly affected above the collapse.

The MTA is running shuttle buses for some service, but it needs about 30 buses to replace one subway train. During commuter rush periods 10 to 12 trains are scheduled every hour.

New York City's population is so dense, with more than 1 million people using the subways every workday, that there is no reasonable alternative to mass transit.

A week after the collapse, the MTA still hadn't announced when it will resume normal service. It is obvious the 181st St. station will be closed for a long time. The MTA is also going to inspect the 168th St. station, which has the same type of con-

struction as 181st St. and was also built in the 1930s.

There had been a collapse at 181st St. in 2007. The MTA obviously knew about the problem at 181st St., since it had already planned to start repairs in December 2009 and complete them in 2010. ([www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info))

According to a report by the New York City Transit Riders Council, which is a state-funded group designed to represent the interests of riders, fewer than 25 percent of New York's subway stations are in acceptable condition. In central Manhattan, almost all the stations are "acceptable," but outside this narrow area, conditions range from dilapidated, dirty and dingy to downright dangerous like 181st St., which is in the middle of busy Washington Heights, a community whose population is mostly from the Dominican Republic.

The subway system is not the only section of New York's infrastructure that is crumbling. Two days after the ceiling collapse, the city had to close the FDR Drive, the major highway that hugs the East River and runs most of the length of Manhattan.

A chunk of the road had collapsed, and the city needed to shore up the ground, loose fill and pilings that hold up the north-bound lanes between East Houston St. and 23rd St. in downtown Manhattan.

One of the bloggers commenting on the subway collapse in the Aug. 18 Daily News wrote, "This work needed to be done ages ago. I have a family member who works as an engineer and he has consistently

warned the Department of Transportation that the roadway is a hazard for drivers."

Others mentioned the bridge collapse in Minneapolis on Aug. 1, 2007, which they blamed on needed maintenance that had been put off.

It is clear that the MTA and the city of New York are focusing on "multi-billion dollar projects that will expand the nation's largest regional transportation network," according to an MTA press release. These projects include the so-called East Side Access that will bring the Long Island Railroad, primarily serving mostly white commuters from Long Island, into Grand Central station, and extending subway service to the Far West Side, which will benefit the Javits Convention Center.

These new big projects will mean big profits for the construction firms and real estate interests that dominate New York City, along with Wall Street and the big banks, which will provide the financing. Fixing the infrastructure, both in mass transit and the city's highways and streets, would mean smaller projects that require far more labor-intensive work. Replacing bricks in an old ceiling, for example, needs more individual workers, rather than big machines that eliminate much of the human labor but can lead to big profits.

The U.S. government has spent trillions bailing out the big banks and the automobile industry. It has shown a greater reluctance to paying for repairs to the crumbling infrastructure in the country. Such repairs, as is clear from New York, could produce millions of necessary jobs, which would be well-paid if done by union labor. □

# Detroit unions

*Continued from page 1*

ers. The official unemployment rate in the city of Detroit stands in excess of 25 percent; the overall figure for the state is over 15 percent.

Home foreclosures remain extremely high. Every neighborhood in Detroit suffers from a proliferation of vacant homes and businesses. Property values for those able to remain in their homes have plummeted.

As a result of the worsening conditions, there has been a recent spike in street crimes involving robberies, carjacking and shootings. The Bing administration has appointed a new police chief, Warren Evans, who has stepped up street sweeps using brutal tactics such as home raids and the deliberate targeting of youthful motorists.

Evans was featured on the front page of the Aug. 16 Sunday Free Press holding an automatic weapon while raiding a home along with patrol officers. There has been no discussion by the Bing administration on the root causes of the economic crisis and the consequent budget shortfall.

On Aug. 12 Bing traveled to Chicago to meet with representatives of the bond rating agencies Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's. His stated objective, according to that day's Detroit Free Press, was to "reassure" these agencies that his administration would take drastic measures to balance the city's budget.

The same article points out how the bond rating agencies have exercised their

## In Minneapolis

# Hundreds sit-in to stop an eviction

By LeiLani Dowell

The struggle to stop foreclosures and evictions is heating up as a sit-in to prevent the eviction of a Minneapolis homeowner and activist entered its 19th day on Aug. 25.

As ruthless lending and mortgage companies foreclose on the lives of people across the country, activists from Baltimore to California, Michigan and Minneapolis have demanded a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions, while at the same time engaging in bold actions to prevent individuals from losing their homes.

Mick Kelly, spokesperson of the Minnesota Coalition for a People's Bailout, described the situation in Minneapolis to WW: "Rosemary Williams is a 60-year-old, African-American woman who's lived in Twin Cities all her life and been an important leader within the community. She's actually lived on the same block for 55 years and been in the same house for the last 23 years."

Following the death of her mother, who lived with her, Williams received a 30-year adjustable-rate mortgage on the property in 2005. However, when the monthly payments almost doubled from \$1,200 to \$2,200, she could no longer afford to pay them.

"Millions of people in the U.S. are being foreclosed on," Kelly said, "but what's different and important about this story is that Rosemary decided she wasn't going to leave. For the last year, she has been involved in building the movement to fight for a moratorium on foreclosures, which has been promoted by the Minnesota Coalition for a People's Bailout."

"On Aug. 7, sheriff's deputies came to her home and proceeded to throw out her family, her grandchildren. They gave her as much time to collect her belongings as it took to change the locks. About 10 min-

utes after the deputies left, the home was reopened and she moved back in. Today is the 19th day of a round-the-clock sit-in that has involved hundreds of people."

Williams' struggle has engaged her community at large. Neighbors have brought food and attended press conferences. The Minnesota Coalition for a People's Bailout has received calls from others facing eviction who, inspired by Rosemary Williams, plan to refuse to leave when officers arrive to evict them.

Forced to respond by the tenacity of Williams and her supporters, the mortgage companies and lenders involved—which include GMAC Financial Services, Aurora Loan Services and the bailed-out Lehman Brothers—have callously given Williams a series of paltry offers. On Aug. 11, Williams' lawyer received an e-mail offering her \$5,000 to leave. Then, after agreeing to return to the negotiating table on Aug. 13, they offered her the option of renting the house for another year—with no option of renewal.

"None of the investors or mortgage companies have given her an agreement that would keep her in the house as a homeowner," Kelly explained. "She wants to retain ownership of a home she helped to build with her mom. She sees these offers as just '30 pieces of silver.' We're going to continue, along with Rosemary, to put heat on politicians and the mortgage companies for a just settlement, and we'll be working with other people in foreclosure to build resistance."

At a press conference on Aug. 8, Williams told the gathered crowd: "We can't give up; that's the bottom line. My mother lived through segregation and she taught me never to give up. She said always to go out with a fight, and that's what we have to do. ... These institutions—these banks, these mortgage companies—they can't treat us like we're economic slaves. They



Rosemary Williams, center, holds news conference with supporters before going into Minneapolis housing court to seek a trial on the legality of losing her home.

get our tax dollars to bail them out."

The fight to keep Williams in her home is part of a broader struggle that is working to prevent the eviction of homeowners across the country. In San Diego, homeowner June Reyno chained herself to her home in November, with the support of union and community activists. In Detroit, activists have helped stall the evictions of Rubie Curl-Pinkins, a disabled African-American senior; Michelle Hart and her mother, who suffers from pancreatic cancer; and Anthony King, who lived at his home for 41 years before facing unemployment and underemployment.

At the same time, organizers have held meetings, challenged legislatures and held protests at home auctions to build the struggle for a moratorium on foreclosure and evictions, on both a statewide and federal level.

In a WW article last Oct. 26, reporter and Bail Out the People Movement activist Sharon Black explained: "Elevating

[the demand for a moratorium] politically has the potential to allow working-class communities the confidence to proceed to more direct and immediate methods of stopping foreclosures—that is, stopping the sheriff from removing furniture and keeping families and individuals in their homes and apartments.

"The problem of housing must be looked at on a deeper and more profound level. Why should housing not be readily available to all workers? Why should such a necessity be provided solely on the basis of whether it is profitable for some landlord, bank or real estate company?"

"In a country as wealthy as the U.S. there is no reason that anyone should go homeless or find it cost prohibitive to have a roof over their head. Clean, decent, safe and attractive housing must be a right for everyone!"

For more information on Rosemary Williams' struggle, visit [www.mn-peoples-bailout.org](http://www.mn-peoples-bailout.org). □



Detroit city workers protest cuts.

stitutions that have demanded the massive cutbacks in municipal services. "Bing must tell the banks to wait. The workers must keep their jobs and benefits," coalition members shouted.

They pointed out the injustice of having city workers and residents pay for the failures of the corporate giants and their agents in government. The banking institutions, auto companies and insurance firms have received trillions in bailout money through the government and the Federal Reserve over the last year while workers have suffered immensely through job losses, foreclosures, evictions, utility shutoffs, the slashing of health care and pension benefits.

The Obama stimulus package has not created any jobs for the unemployed and underemployed in Detroit. In fact, it was reported in the Detroit News on Aug. 12 that the state of Michigan is losing approximately \$50 million a month due to the drop in income and sales tax revenues.

The coalition has called for a mass organizing meeting Sept. 12 for the workers and community to declare an economic state of emergency in Detroit and Michigan. It will be held at Central United Methodist Church on Woodward and East Adams beginning at 11 a.m.

A leaflet from the group says, "It is time for the people to declare a State of Economic Emergency and plan actions to guarantee our fundamental rights to housing, utilities, education, basic services and jobs in accordance with the law. We will develop a strategy to implement a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shut-offs; an end to school closings and cuts in public education; guaranteed health care and basic social services for poor and working people; defending union contracts and workers' rights to living wages and pensions; ending plant and office closings and lay-offs; and guaranteeing the right to a job consistent with the Full Employment Act." □

power over the fiscal well-being of the city. Reporter Suzette Hackney states, "In January Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings downgraded Detroit's bond rating to junk bond status as a result of the city's inability to regain structural balance and ongoing financial deterioration. Approximately \$4.7 billion of the city's debt was affected by the downgrades."

Hackney goes on to point out, "Downgrades can carry severe consequences for the city. Besides higher interest rates on the city's debt, depriving the budget of money to fund services to residents, it also could force the city to pay millions of dollars to investors with certain deals with the city."

The Aug. 23 Sunday Free Press noted that city governments throughout the region will face serious problems in financing public projects. "Soon many cash-strapped governments might see higher interest rates that could make it too expensive to finance public improvement projects that some communities need badly."

Another article in the same issue notes, "Even Michigan cities that have maintained excellent or above-average bond ratings are at risk of seeing them fall and interest rates rise."

In response to this pressure, Bing is demanding that workers and residents accept massive cuts in employment, salaries and services. On Aug. 10 an emergency meeting between the city administration and 50 union locals ended in a shouting match as labor representatives expressed

their opposition to the drastic cuts. Bing demanded that the unions accept a 10-percent pay cut by Aug. 28. This wage cut has already been imposed on nonunion employees. The mayor says that the city is running out of cash and could be insolvent in another two months. He has also mentioned that if the workers and city residents do not accept the proposed and imposed cuts, the city could fall into bankruptcy and receivership.

However, even if workers and community residents accept the salary and service cuts, "There are going to be layoffs regardless. At a minimum 1,000 layoffs," Bing said. (Detroit Free Press, Aug. 12)

Union leaders at the Aug. 10 meeting refused to accept the pay and benefit cuts. Henry Gaffney, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union, representing 1,000 bus drivers, said after the meeting that the city needs to "clean up your own house and then come talk to us."

In comparison to other public entities and private industry, city workers are grossly underpaid and overworked. Thousands of job openings have remained unfilled for years, requiring employees to perform multiple tasks, while their cost of living increases every year.

### Need for worker-community alliance to fight cutbacks

Members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition at the demonstration outside City Hall called for the suspension of the debt service payments to the financial in-

# U.S. renews campaign against Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Abdel Basset al-Megrahi returned home to Libya Aug. 21 to a hero's welcome. He had been held in a Scottish prison for eight years in connection with the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, on Dec. 21, 1988. All 259 people on board the aircraft were killed plus 11 others on the ground.

Al-Megrahi, who has always maintained his innocence, was released on humanitarian grounds by the Scottish authorities after he was diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer.

This political prisoner's release created the conditions for a renewal of attacks on the North African state of Libya, which since 1969 has been headed by Muammar Qaddafi, a leader with an anti-imperialist history. Qaddafi currently serves as chairman of the African Union. Beginning with the Reagan administration, the U.S. had for years designated Libya under Qaddafi a "terrorist state."

The U.S. Air Force bombed Libya, which has been a strong advocate of African unity and socialism, on April 14, 1986. The bombings sparked outrage throughout Africa and the world.

## U.S. relations with Libya strained

After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and the escalation of the U.S. so-called "war on terror," Washington attempted to normalize relations with Libya in an effort to further isolate Iraq, Syria, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Sudan and Iran. During the period after the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Bush administration claimed that Libya had agreed to dismantle and eliminate its purported "weapons of mass destruction" in exchange for greater diplomatic recognition from Washington and London.

In August 2003 the Libyan government agreed to pay \$2.7 billion in compensation to the families of the victims of the Pan Am 103 bombing. In September of the same year, the United Nations Security Council voted to lift sanctions against Libya.

In 2006, Washington restored full diplomatic relations with Libya, opening the door for further economic cooperation. The country was removed from the State Department's list of governments that al-



Libya's Oya newspaper shows Libyans greeting al-Megrahi (center) upon his arrival in Tripoli on Aug. 20.

legedly "support terrorism." During the final days of the Bush administration, then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited the country.

Libya has also been involved in peace negotiations surrounding the ongoing conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan.

During the course of the normalization process, U.S. and British oil firms were allowed to resume economic relations with Libya, which is said to hold the largest oil reserves on the African continent. Yet this apparent thawing in relations between the U.S. and Libya has been jeopardized by the Obama administration's virulent statements in response to the release of al-Megrahi and his welcoming by the Libyan government and people.

Scottish Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill took responsibility for making the decision to release al-Megrahi from prison. "It is my decision that Mr. al-Megrahi ... be released on compassionate grounds and be returned to Libya to die," MacAskill said. (Al-Jazeera, Aug. 21)

MacAskill told journalists, "He is a dying man; he is terminally ill. My decision is that he returns home to die."

Nonetheless, U.S. President Barack Obama, under pressure from the FBI and right-wing political elements inside the country, said that the release of Megrahi was "a mistake" and that the former political prisoner should be held under house arrest in Libya.

In a statement issued on the eve of his release, al-Megrahi said, "As a result of my surrender, and that judgment of the court, I had to spend over 10 years in prison. I cannot find words in my language or yours that give proper expression to the desolation I have felt. This horrible ordeal is not ended by my return to Libya.

"The remaining days of my life are being lived under the shadow of the wrongness of my conviction. I have been faced with an appalling choice: to risk dying in pris-

on in the hope that my name is cleared posthumously or to return home still carrying the weight of the guilty verdict, which will never now be lifted." (Al-Jazeera, Aug. 20)

Although the U.S. government and prosecutors have claimed that al-Megrahi was a Libyan intelligence officer, he has been consistent in stating that he was an airline executive at the time of the Lockerbie bombing. Evidence of guilt was highly circumstantial and questionable. Another Libyan was also turned over during the late 1990s for trial at a special court in the Netherlands, but he was acquitted of the charges.

A Scottish court rejected an appeal by al-Megrahi in 2002. However, a judicial review of his conviction in 2007 raised a number of questions in regard to the veracity of the evidence used against him during the trial. Particular doubt was cast on the testimony of Tony Gauci, a Maltese shopkeeper who claimed that clothing purchased in his store by al-Megrahi

was found in the wreckage of Pan Am 103.

According to Al-Jazeera, "It was suggested that Gauci may have seen a photo of al-Megrahi in a magazine days before picking him out of line-up." Al-Megrahi made a decision to drop his appeal when Libya, which has negotiated for his release over many years, reached a deal with the British government to have him released on compassionate grounds.

## Behind the agreement

With Libya serving as chair of the African Union and the imperialist countries desiring to access Libya's vast oil and natural gas reserves, the U.S. and Britain have motives to further normalize relations and enhance existing economic agreements.

These factors were raised in an interview with Seif al-Islam, the son of Muammar Qaddafi, broadcast over Libyan television on Aug. 22. Al-Islam said that the release of al-Megrahi was raised during talks over possible oil and natural gas contracts between the British government and Libya.

Al-Islam described the release of al-Megrahi as "a victory" for the people of Libya. "In all commercial contracts, for oil and gas with Britain, [Megrahi] was always on the negotiating table," al-Islam told the Al Mutawasit television channel.

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair visited Libya in May 2007 during the signing of an exploration contract with the British oil firm BP for \$900 million. Despite these statements by al-Islam and the signing of the 2007 contract, the British Foreign Office has insisted that the release of al-Megrahi was the sole decision of the Scottish government and that "no deal has been made between the UK government and the Libyan government in relation to Megrahi and any commercial interest in the country." (BBC, Aug. 22)

Al-Megrahi met with Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, who issued a statement saying in part: "At this moment I would like to send a message to our friends in Scotland, the Scottish Nationalist Party, the Scottish prime minister ... and I congratulate them on their courage and for having proved their independence despite the unacceptable and unreasonable pressures they faced." (Jana, Aug. 22) □

# Afghan election sets stage for U.S. to escalate war

*Continued from page 1*

dia-controlled the voting places. Most of these figures were lined up with incumbent President Hamid Karzai, who even pulled off a last-minute deal with Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, bringing him back from exile in Turkey in an attempt to deliver votes from the Uzbek ethnic group.

One of the more absurd aspects of the election was the alleged high participation of women voting in certain areas. It turned out that men who were "heads" of families could hold the voting cards of all the women in the household and vote for them. Sonali Kolhatkar, co-author of the book, "Bleeding Afghanistan: Washington, Warlords, and the Propaganda of Silence," said on Democracy Now! on Aug. 20 that "thousands of women have been registered to vote by their husbands or by male relatives, and voting has apparently been done in their name."

Whether Karzai was able to win a clear victory—requiring more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round—is still in doubt. There were over 40 candidates, but

only a few were really in the contest. Karzai's main rival, former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, claims Karzai's forces stuffed ballot boxes and stole ballots in the south. Outside election observers agree there was vote manipulation which aided Karzai. Both Abdullah, who also cooperates with the occupation forces, and Karzai claim to have won the election.

Karzai's rivals have filed over a thousand claims of election fraud. The result is that the election, which the U.S. and NATO hoped would somehow add legitimacy to the occupation regime, has only discredited it further.

## Pentagon wants more troops

An Aug. 23 New York Times article said that U.S. commanders in Afghanistan are reporting gains by the resistance forces and requesting more U.S. and NATO troops. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, is now supposed to be working on new requests to the administration to be filed in early September. The media

are hinting that McChrystal will ask for more troops.

In addition, on CNN's "State of the Union" program on Aug. 23, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chair Adm. Mike Mullen said that "the Afghan situation is serious and it is deteriorating," despite the recent addition of 17,000 U.S. troops.

The Pentagon is apparently about to increase pressure on the Obama administration to send more troops to Afghanistan even before any have left Iraq.

Meanwhile, unlike in Iraq, the U.S. president has taken political responsibility for the war in Afghanistan. He reiterated his campaign position before a meeting of Veterans of Foreign Wars in Phoenix on Aug. 17, calling the war in Afghanistan "fundamental to the defense of our people." Obama added, "This is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity."

Allegedly, this is "a war of necessity" because al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden are the main targets. In reality, both have almost disappeared from the media and from Afghanistan. The Afghans

themselves, Taliban included, had nothing to do with the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

People in the U.S., especially those who voted for Obama, are growing more and more hostile to the Afghan war. A new poll shows that a majority of the people in the United States "now see the war in Afghanistan as not worth fighting, and just a quarter say more U.S. troops should be sent to the country." (Washington Post, Aug. 20)

According to the poll, seven out of 10 Democrats "say the war has not been worth its costs, and fewer than one in five support an increase in troop levels." Most of those who still support the war in Afghanistan are Republicans, who are against the Obama administration on all domestic issues and oppose his presidency in general.

Republican Sen. John McCain has publicly asked for more troops, and will pressure the administration to send them should the generals request more forces, as is expected.

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## At mass rally in Lebanon

# Hezbollah rejects new Israeli threats

By Joyce Chediac and Paul Wilcox  
Dahia, Lebanon

The pride was palpable and the emotion stirring. It was the pride of a people who have twice freed their land from U.S.-backed Israeli forces.

Tens of thousands of men, women and children gathered in this poor neighborhood south of Beirut on Aug. 14 to stand firm against a new round of Israeli threats to Lebanon. They also marked the anniversary of the Lebanese people's victory over the U.S.-backed Israeli invasion, siege and bombardment of their country in 2006.

The Divine Victory rally called by Hezbollah, Lebanon's national resistance movement, took place in the Shia suburb of Dahia, which was punished brutally by Israeli bombers three years ago.

Just days before the planned rally, several Israeli officials—including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—challenged Hezbollah's right to have arms and threatened more violence against Hezbollah and Lebanon. Israel has invaded Lebanon nine times since 1945, but was driven out by the Lebanese people in 2000 and again in 2006.

Addressing the rally via a satellite television hookup, Hezbollah General Secretary Sayyed Hassan Nasrullah answered these threats. He called Hezbollah's forces "deterrent," adding, "We do not want war, but we are not afraid of it, and we say to you: If you bomb Beirut or its suburb, we will bomb Tel Aviv."

Nasrullah said that the strength of the Hezbollah movement was not its weapons but the unity of the Lebanese people and the determination of its supporters. If the Aug. 14 rally was any indication, Hezbollah's support among Lebanese people, particularly the oppressed Shiite population, is hard-won, enthusiastic and enduring.

### People's victory in 2006

The people, under the leadership of Hezbollah, withstood Israel's devastating military assault during the 2006 war while simultaneously fighting back against enormous odds. Lebanon's resistance stopped cold a ground advance of Israeli soldiers less than a mile into Lebanon and sent them scuttling back home. It was a huge disaster for Israel.

In retaliation, Tel Aviv waged war on the civilian population of Lebanon. For 34 days it bombed houses and apartment buildings and destroyed Lebanon's civilian infrastructure, including its main power and water purification plants and 60 bridges. In this scorched-earth assault, more than 1,000 Lebanese civilians were killed, a third of them children.

The U.S. government and media blamed the victims and the resistance. Just as the U.S. ruling class showed no sympathy for the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 who perished fighting the Nazis during World War II, it has no sympathy for the heroes of southern Lebanon who in 2006 stood up to the Israeli army and its modern U.S.-supplied weapons. Hezbollah, the defender of the Lebanese people, has been branded as a "terrorist" group by Washington.

### New threats from Israel backed by U.S.

Once again, Israel is rattling the saber of war. On Aug. 5 Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that Israel was "not ready to accept" the Lebanese resistance's "40,000 rockets aimed at Israel." (Daily Star, Aug. 13)

On Aug. 10 Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon added, "If one hair on the head of an Israeli representative or tourist is harmed" anywhere in the world, "we will see Hezbollah as responsible."

The next day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that if Hezbollah joins the Lebanese government, "the Lebanese government will be held responsible for any attacks coming from its territory against Israel." These threats and blatant interference into Lebanon's internal affairs come at a time when Lebanon is trying to form a cabinet.

Israel would never have made these threats without full support from Washington. In fact, two weeks before the recent Lebanese election, Vice President Jo-

seph Biden went to Beirut and said that if Hezbollah made significant electoral gains, the U.S. would cut off all aid to Lebanon. Nevertheless, Hezbollah held its own in that election.

### Rally reviews people's victory

The Dahia rally began with footage on a giant television screen of some of the people's victories. Cheers went up when an Israeli tank was taken out and an F-16 helicopter brought down. A huge roar rose from the crowd when an Israeli gunship was hit by the people's forces. A caption followed on the screen with the equivalent of "This is Lebanon, stupid!" In other words, "Haven't you learned yet? Lebanon fights back!"

Nasrullah was welcomed with tears and shouts of support.

He called the 2006 victory "a miracle made in Lebanon and by the Lebanese people." Nasrullah said that after the Israelis were forced out of Lebanon in 2000, then had to withdraw from Gaza, and three years ago had to pull back after the second Lebanon war, "It is evident that Israel is no longer an unbeatable state."

He restated Hezbollah's position that the organization had no problem with Judaism, that the problem was Zionism. He said that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's warnings were "psychological warfare" and served to sow discord among Lebanese parties, hinder the formation of a cabinet, and prevent Hezbollah from joining a new Lebanese government.

Regarding Israeli charges about Hezbollah's weaponry, he said, "Search for what we are made of before researching on arms, combat formation, strategies

and tactics." He added, "Ultimately those who have the determination can fight and win."

Nasrullah ruled out an imminent war, but said that in case Israel waged war, there were two options, "To surrender, disarm ourselves and become weak—this is out of the question. The second option is to be ready and to consolidate our power to prevent war; and in this way if war is waged on us, we will win it."

"Can we prevent an Israeli war on Lebanon? Yes, we can. Can we stop Israel from thinking about waging war on Lebanon? Yes, we can by having a deterrent force. In Israel it is not easy anymore to take a decision to go to war with Lebanon."

"The objective of any coming war will be to eradicate the resistance, but can this current Israeli army and this Israeli government wage a war to eradicate the resistance in Lebanon? They cannot . . . It is our right to tell the Israelis that if you bomb Dahia or Beirut, we will bomb Tel Aviv. We have the ability to hit any city or town in your entity. Carry out as many drills as you want, develop your tanks' armors and train your brigades; they will be crushed in our towns, villages, valleys and hills . . ."

"Our strength lies in our resistance and the future is ours; we make it with our own hands, with the blood of our martyrs, with our faith and belief. This is the lesson of this historic victory." (All quotes from Nasrullah are from almanar.com.lb.)

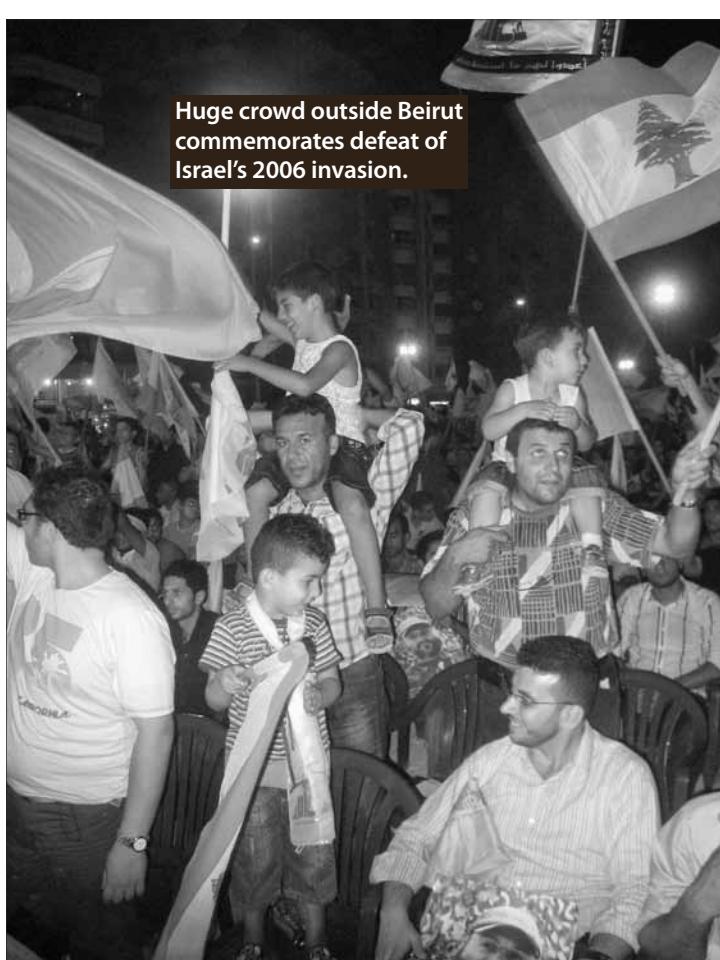
Fathers put their sons on their shoulders; women held up pictures of fallen leaders and destroyed Israeli tanks. Thousands waved the yellow Hezbollah flag and the red, white and green flag of Lebanon. The crowd stood and roared in pride, determination and dignity. □

## WW's 'Top Ten' reasons .

### Why U.S. ruling class hates Hezbollah

1. It isn't Hezbollah Inc.
2. Unlike the Pentagon, when Hezbollah gets money for reconstruction, it uses it for reconstruction.
3. Unlike the Israeli army, it is defending its legitimate homeland.
4. Unlike in New Orleans, it helps people return home after a disaster.
5. Unlike U.S. military recruits, its volunteers know what they are fighting for.
6. And they actually believe in it.
7. Hezbollah doesn't have to pay its recruits \$30,000 signing bonuses.
8. It doesn't send its militia to fight poor people overseas.
9. Like George Washington, it is called "terrorist" by the colonialists, but Hezbollah has never owned slaves.
10. It doesn't need the "private option" to provide health care to the Lebanese people.

—Paul Wilcox



Huge crowd outside Beirut commemorates defeat of Israel's 2006 invasion.



# Solidarity with the Honduras resistance!

**I**t is now nearly two months since an illegal, unconstitutional, brutal military coup deposed the legitimate president of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, and installed an illegitimate coup regime. The 13 Honduran oligarch families and their U.S.-trained Honduran generals found Zelaya too friendly with President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. Too friendly also with Honduras' poor. He was ousted.

That was only the beginning of a long struggle. Starting that June 28 coup day, a mass movement began to grow to confront what most Hondurans call the "de facto government," that is, the illegal coup regime. Whatever differences had existed among leftist parties and organizations of workers, peasants, women and Indigenous peoples, they have now come together to form a coordinated, unified, if unarmed, fighting front. Its name: the National Popular Front of Resistance Against the Coup D'état, which groups together all those who want to oust the coup leaders and bring back Zelaya.

Two months of de facto government has meant two months of Washington maintaining its relations with the coup regime, two months of facing the army and police in the streets, two months of illegal arrests and beatings of activists, two months of the military firing tear-gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition at the people. But the National Front is still out in the streets. It is still mobilizing strikes and public meetings. It is still taking action.

On Aug. 22 their assembly decided to move once more. The next day thousands sang revolutionary and resistance songs for hours, along with progressive artists from around Latin America. Some thousands more marched Aug. 24 in Tegucigalpa, the capital, in conjunction with visits of delegations from the International Criminal Court and the Organization of American States.

The OAS delegation is supposed to be negotiating a return of the legal president under a compromise deal that leaves the coup-makers and their bosses unpunished and takes away some of the little power the elected president had before he left. Nevertheless, the coup leaders and their oligarch bosses have rejected this deal. So the struggle continues.

Honduran taxi drivers, teachers and other unionists who have been striking on and off, the farmers who have blocked crossroads on the highways, the women who have marched in the streets, the Afro-Hondurans and Indigenous peoples—all are giving an example to the people of all Latin America and to the workers and oppressed people in the United States about how to carry out a prolonged struggle against a heavily armed oppressor. They should not be alone.

They aren't. In Mexico City from Aug. 20 to 24, the Sao Paolo Forum, a discussion group of 520 delegates from 32 countries, representing 62 leftist parties and movements of Latin America and observers from other parts of the world, made solidarity with the Honduran resistance a central point on its agenda. The people of Latin America, their most progressive leaders, and all those who don't want military "gorillas" running their countries on behalf of U.S. imperialism stand with the Honduran resistance to the coup.

To the North, in the United States this Aug. 28, protests now endorsed by the Sao Paolo Forum have been called in at least 10 cities in solidarity with the people of Honduras. (Click on Action Alerts at iacenter.org.) We must show the Hondurans on the second-month anniversary of the coup that right here in the belly of the imperialist beast there is solidarity with the resistance and opposition to the coup leaders and their backers in the U.S. ruling class. □

## Criminal judge in Texas

*Continued from page 3*

set by her own court. She is still fulfilling her election campaign promise of being a pro-prosecution judge."

Judge Keller's trial ended after four days of testimony. Her attorney tried to blame death penalty activists and Richard's attorneys for causing the judge's problems.

The specially appointed judge who presided over the trial is to "promptly" make a recommendation to the Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct. Keller could receive a reprimand or be removed from the bench.

"Whatever happens, Keller's judicial career is over. Even if they decide not to remove her from the bench, she will never get re-elected," commented ex-convict and prison activist Ray Hill, host of KPFT radio's "The Prison Show." "It's over for her."

Emphasizing the same opinion, TSADP posted on their Facebook page that "at a hearing on Wednesday, she said in a crowded courtroom that if she had it to do again, she would do the same thing. That testimony is further proof of why Judge Keller needs to be removed from the bench."

Keller's callous disregard for the life of a person facing execution was editori-

alized by the New York Times last week in an opinion titled "An Unfit Judge." It compared Keller's actions to the disturbing dissent that U.S. Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas recently delivered in the Troy Davis case. The two judges suggested there was no constitutional problem with executing a man who could prove he was innocent, as long as he had received "a fair trial."

"Judge Keller is just the tip of the iceberg when you consider the long history of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals," death row prison leader Harvey Earvin, founder of Panthers United for Revolutionary Education (PURE), told Workers World.

"She is the current face of the long, racist history of this court, which has utter contempt for any person on death row. The other eight Republicans on the court may be a bit more subtle than Keller, but they do the ruling class's bidding just the same. Keller had no qualms about executing an innocent Shaka Sankofa in 2000, and she didn't care about executing Michael Richard in 2007. We need to not only get rid of her but the whole legal system that is used against the poor and oppressed in this country." □

## From new intro to 'High Tech, Low Pay'

# Does present crisis compare to Great Depression?

*Continued from page 4*

to higher and higher levels throughout the last 70 years, since the beginning of World War II, have exhausted themselves. Artificial means employed to keep the system going are no longer sufficient to revive it in any significant way. This has led to a period of profound stagnation and perhaps to absolute decline.

In the period since World War II, U.S. capitalism has relied on various artificial methods to keep the system from collapsing. War and war preparation were a basic stimulant for decades during the post-war period. The Korean War, the Vietnam War, the military buildup during the Cold War—all served to generate capitalist production and profits, as the system could not rely on the civilian economy to automatically keep it going.

But by the end of the 1980s, even the \$2 trillion Reagan military buildup in a "full-court press" to undermine the Soviet Union and the socialist camp was insufficient to sustain capitalist prosperity. The monstrous growth of the military-industrial complex has its limits as an economic stimulant.

Marcy dealt with the role of the military in bolstering the capitalist economy in Chapter 2. He showed how it fostered the scientific-technological revolution and shaped crucial sectors of the corporate economic structure to aid its design for world empire. At the same time, he showed how dependent even the largest corporations had become on the military.

The continuous development of the scientific-technological revolution, the restructuring of capitalist industry, the relentless anti-labor campaign of union-busting, the extraction of concessions,

the destruction of benefits, the driving down of manufacturing wages and the steady expansion of the low-wage service economy—all enormously increased inequality in the national income in favor of capital and at the expense of the workers. All this served to bolster the profitability of the bosses and bankers. It gave the bosses a great infusion of surplus value, stolen from the workers, to ease the crisis of capital.

The collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and the opening up of China to capitalist investment gave imperialism a brief period of unprecedented global expansion. The monopolies seized this opportunity to create global networks of exploitation and vast super-profits as they engineered a worldwide wage competition among the international working class and promoted the vicious race to the bottom previously referred to. Driving down the value of labor is the time-tested method of capital for combating the declining rate of profit brought about by the growing cost allocated to constant capital (plant, equipment and raw materials) and the reduction in variable capital (wages).

Globalized production has now brought a worldwide epidemic of layoffs and mass unemployment.

Militarism, technological development and anti-labor attacks were not enough to save the banks and corporations. Huge injections of credit were required. The ruling class resorted to speculation, credit bubbles, mortgage schemes, exotic financial instruments and all manner of fraud to make profits based on trading in fictitious capital. To overcome the limitations on the profitability of industry, unlimited paper profits were conjured up.

*To be continued.*

## Help to publish High Tech, Low Pay

World View Forum is reissuing this classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party founder, on the party's 50th anniversary.

The book rings as true today as when it was first published in 1986. Marcy explained how the high-tech revolution was destroying high-paying jobs while changing the social composition of the working class, bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle.

Marcy's analysis, strategies and tactics are still on-target. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of "Low-Wage Capitalism," explains how world developments have heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Funds are needed to republish this vital book. While the writing, editing, proofreading, design and artwork are all done by voluntary labor, the printing, binding and promotional costs are high.

Help to get this book to working people, activists and readers nationwide—and to union halls, campuses, libraries and bookstores.

Your contribution will make a difference! Everyone who donates \$25 or more will receive a copy of "High Tech, Low Pay."

*YES!* I want to help with publishing and promotional costs.

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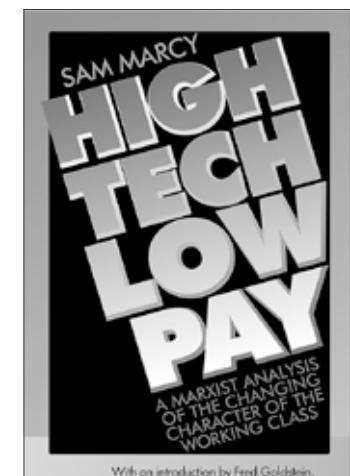
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With an introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of Low-Wage Capitalism

Return to World View Forum, 55 West 17th Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011

# Seeing Israel's prisons through Palestinian eyes

By Sharon Eolis  
Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip, populated by 1.5 million Palestinians, is virtually an open-air prison—a place of punishment and exile for Palestinians. No one can officially get in or out of Gaza unless given permission at border checkpoints that are opened at the whim of Israel and Egypt. If your name is not on a pre-existing list, you can't get into Gaza or leave it.

At the end of the recent Viva Palestina U.S. convoy, a Palestinian man with a U.S. passport tried to bring his family out of Gaza so they could travel back to the U.S. Although his spouse and children have U.S. passports, Egyptian border guards refused to allow the bus through the checkpoint with them aboard.

Convoy delegates tried to carry the children across the border, but security guards refused to allow this and held the bus up for over an hour. Only those who had been on the bus when it entered Gaza were allowed to return. The Palestinian delegate had to leave his family behind when he returned to Egypt.

## Prisons in Israel

In addition to the open-air prison of the Gaza Strip, more than 11,000 Palestinian women, men and children are incarcerated in Israeli maximum security facilities like Nufha, Haderim, Jalamy, and Ashkalon, among others.

In Gaza City, a group of Palestinian women with family members languishing in Israeli prisons described for convoy visitors the horrific conditions in these concentration camps.

Muhammad Hassamand, the spouse of one of the women, has spent 23 years in prison. His sons, one 12 and another 15, cannot see their father. His spouse said, "We didn't go to them. The Israelis came to our land. We are the indigenous people. There are more than 11,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails [compared to] one Israeli soldier."

Another elderly woman told of losing her eyesight since her son went to prison 10 years ago. "I lost my eyes from crying all day and night for my son. My son has been sentenced for the rest of his life. He has spent more than 20 years in prison. For more than 10 years, I didn't see him in my eyes, and now I can't. I want to see my son. We want our efforts and your efforts to help release him."

Another woman said, "My husband has been held in an Israeli prison for 22 years, and I have never been allowed to visit." She thinks her son is also incarcerated in Israel, but she doesn't know if he is alive or dead.

Since 1967, over 700,000 Palestinians—20 percent of the total population in the occupied territories—have been arrested. The vast majority are men—approximately 40 percent of the total male Palestinian population.

Since the second Intifada began in 2000, more than 70,000 Palestinians, including at least 850 women, have been arrested by Israel, according to Abdullah al-Zeghari, director of the Bethlehem branch of the Palestinian Prisoners' Society.

Many believe that imprisonment and torture are a core element of the Israeli occupation's strategy of collective containment and punishment of the Palestinian people.

Anyone who the Israelis think will resist the occupation is in danger of being

imprisoned. This includes non-military political activists, community organizers, paramedics, doctors, journalists, teachers and students as well as resistance fighters.

## Torture and death in Israeli jails

According to the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, B'Tselem, more than 85 percent of Palestinians detained since 1967 have been subjected to torture, and at least 197 have died in prison. Medical negligence was the cause of 50 deaths. The rest were from torture or executions.

Until 1999 nearly all Palestinian prisoners were tortured for information based on the Landau Ministerial Committee (1987) policy that allowed "moderate physical and psychological pressure." This was after an Israeli High Court of Justice ruling prohibited the use of several forms of torture.

The police and army, however, continue to use prohibited methods, similar to the treatment prisoners have been subjected to at Abu Ghraib in Iraq and Guantánamo Bay prison.

Forms of torture used include beatings, kicking, strip searches, sleep deprivation, verbal abuse and psychological threats, including those against family members. Prisoners have been bound to chairs in painful positions or forced to crouch in a frog-like position.

Prisoners have been kept in solitary confinement or held in tents in the desert in extreme temperatures. Prisoners' food has been placed next to the holes used as toilets. Inmates have been denied access to hot water or change of clothing.

All these conditions are against United Nations' basic human rights standards.

## Medical negligence

More than 1,600 prisoners suffer from chronic diseases but are denied care. The prison administration refuses to give permission for surgery for such life-threatening conditions as cancers and kidney transplants. It also refuses to allow medicine from families, physicians or the Red Cross.

Administrative detention, where a person can be held for extended periods of time with no trial or formal charges, is a violation of international and human rights law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Administrative detention in Israel was originally based on the British Mandate Defense (Emergency) Regulation of 1945.



Mothers in Gaza show pictures of their imprisoned sons.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

It allowed police to hold a prisoner based on confidential information that the detainee and her/his lawyer are not allowed to see. While a detainee is allowed an appeal, the confidential nature of the "evidence" makes a fair trial impossible.

This practice is still in effect in Israel. According to Israel Prisons Service, as of May 31 there were at least 449 Palestinian administrative detainees. This number was as high as 849 in November 2007. Palestinian detainees have been held under administrative detention orders from six months to eight years.

## Women and children

Presently 63 women political prisoners are held in Hasharon and Damoon prisons. Some are as young as 14. They are subjected to humiliating treatment, including strip searches, sometimes in the presence of men.

Pregnant women are forced to deliver their babies in prison cells where these infants continue to live with their mothers for years. Since 1967 the Israeli army has captured more than 10,000 Palestinian women. Eight hundred were kidnapped during the al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000.

The Israeli Defense Forces have kidnapped a total of 7,600 children, male and female, since 2000. Some were as young as 12 years old. According to IPS February 2009 reports, there were 374 Palestinian children in jail; 50 were under 16 years old.

The Israeli army considers children

age 16 to be adults. This is in violation of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a signer.

These children are also subjected to torture and forced confession. Many are held in jails with adult prisoners and subjected to sexual and physical violence. They may be denied family visits, deprived of medical care, and suffer from theft of personal belongings. They are also deprived of education, recreation facilities and culture, and are tortured during attempts to coerce them to collaborate with Israel.

Like Black and Latino/a prisoners in the U.S., most incarcerated Palestinians are held in jails far from their homes. Since Hamas was elected in 2006, Israel has outlawed family visits to prisoners.

Also like the U.S., Israel has enacted a new status called "unlawful combatant." This legalizes the detention of Lebanese and Arab prisoners even when there is no evidence for trial. This law is now applied to the people of Gaza.

Palestinians in Gaza hold one Israeli soldier prisoner. They have offered to exchange him for those held by Israel. While using this prisoner as an excuse for its wars on the people of Gaza, Israel has refused to negotiate any prisoner exchange.

Palestinian prisoners have a long history of resistance in Israeli jails. They have organized hunger strikes to protest violent attacks on prisoners and denial of visits and medical care. In some cases thousands of prisoners have participated. The Israeli police and security forces have responded with great brutality.

The prisoners demonstrated their solidarity with the rest of Gaza during the July 2006 war on Lebanon and during the Israeli war and massacre in Gaza that began in December 2008.

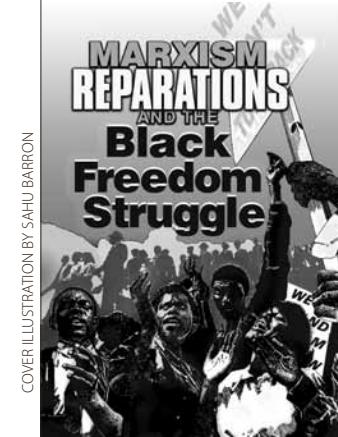
The Palestinian people are requesting that the international community call protests and launch long-term campaigns to end the incarceration of Palestinians in Israeli prisons as part of full liberation for the people of Palestine.

*Eolis is an anti-Zionist Jewish woman who was a delegate on the Viva Palestina U.S. convoy to Gaza this July. Many statistics come from the blog of the International Campaign of Solidarity with the Palestinian Prisoners.*

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

- Racism, national oppression & self-determination
- Black labor from chattel slavery to wage slavery
- Black youth: repression & resistance
- Black & Brown unity: A pillar of struggle for human rights & global justice!
- Are conditions ripe again today? 40th anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion
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## Si esta es una recuperación... ¿Dónde están los trabajos?

Por Fred Goldstein

Los economistas capitalistas, los expertos y los jugadores del mercado de acciones no se deciden si hay o no una "recuperación".

Para los/as trabajadores/as que están perdiendo sus hogares, sus seguros de salud, sus ingresos y que están profundamente endeudados/as, no hay ninguna ambigüedad. No hay una recuperación.

Sin embargo, tan pronto hay una pequeñísima señal de noticias un poco menos malas—que no es tan mala como en el período anterior—los bien remunerados expertos rápidamente declaran que se avecina una recuperación.

Por ejemplo, el 31 de julio el gobierno anunció que la economía había decrecido por "sólo" un por ciento en el segundo trimestre, en comparación al 6,4 por ciento en el primer trimestre del año 2009. El 6 de agosto, una semana después, anunció que "sólo" 247.000 trabajadores/as perdieron sus empleos en julio y que el desempleo declinó—from 9,5 al 9,4 por ciento.

Resultó que 422.000 trabajadores/as más se salieron de la fuerza laboral y no estaban siendo contados/as. Por lo tanto la tasa de desempleo en realidad subió al 9,7 por ciento si los/as trabajadores/as desmoralizados/as hubieran sido contados/as como parte de la fuerza laboral.

Definitivamente no toma mucho para alentar a los capitalistas expertos que están desesperados en busca de optimismo. Después de todo el optimismo hace que las acciones suban. Por eso estos le ponen poca atención a esta pequeña "discrepancia".

En el 10 de agosto, más noticias buenas. El capitalismo francés y el alemán tuvieron una pequeña alza después de largos períodos de bajón económico. Esto fue seguido dos días después por el anuncio de que Japón tuvo una pequeña alza también, luego de un largo y drástico período de contracción económica.

Ben Bernanke, presidente del Sistema de la Reserva Federal, pronunció que había luz al final del túnel: la recuperación está en el horizonte en la segunda parte del año.

El comercio supuestamente estaría en ascenso. Los economistas casi se saborean la recuperación.

### Falsa promesa de "buenas noticias"

Pero el 13 de agosto se dio la noticia de que las ventas al por menor habían caído—áun en Walt-Mart, Kohl's y otras tiendas gigantes que venden a los/as trabajadores/as. El 14 de agosto, el prestigioso reporte sobre la confianza de los consumidores de la Universidad de Michigan mostró un gran descenso; cuando se esperaba un alza. El mercado de acciones de Estados Unidos bajó, seguido por una grave caída en Asia y después una profundización en el descenso de nuevo en Estados Unidos.

Las deudas de las tarjetas de crédito, las hipotecarias y los despidos están en alza. Cerca de 30 millones de trabajadores/as están o desempleados/as o sub empleados/as y la cifra continúa en ascenso. La bancarrota personal está en ascenso.

¿Qué se puede esperar de las ventas si no es su caída? Las masas populares tienen poco o ningún dinero. Lo que tienen está siendo utilizado para pagar las deudas, hacer lo posible para que sus hijos cursen sus estudios, pagar por el cuidado médico o simplemente para una sobrevivencia básica.

Es por esto que más de 100 bancos han fracasado desde que comenzó la crisis. Este año 77 bancos estadounidenses han quebrado. Otros 300 están en la lista de observación por la Corporación Federal de Seguros de Depósito, (FDIC siglas en inglés.) Cinco bancos fallaron sólo en la semana entre el 10 y 14 de agosto.

### La nueva y peligrosa fase del capitalismo

Este sube y baja de la opinión sobre la recuperación, acontece frente a un incesante aumento en el sufrimiento y la pobreza entre los/as trabajadores/as y oprimidos/as.

He aquí la contradicción.

El capitalismo tradicionalmente no está supuesto a funcionar de esta forma. La manera en que se supone que debe funcionar es la siguiente: Cuando hay una crisis económica, hay una crisis para los/as trabajadores/as. Cuando hay una recuperación económica, hay una recuperación para los/as trabajadores/as. Un declive trae malos tiempos. Una recuperación trae mejores tiempos.

¿Pero qué pasa si hay una recuperación del comercio y todavía existe una crisis para los/as trabajadores/as? Claramente el capitalismo está en una nueva y peligrosa fase en cuando a los/as trabajadores/as se refiere.

Ni uno de estos expertos sabe si va a haber algún tipo de recuperación capitalista del comercio o si toda la economía colapsará una vez que el dinero del estímulo se acabe aquí y en Europa y en el Japón—o quizás que colapse antes de eso.

Pero si logran impulsar una recuperación para los empresarios y los banqueros al darles miles de millones de dólares en fondos de rescate tomados de los/as trabajadores/as, la crisis estructural real a largo plazo del sistema se pondrá de manifiesto—una era cada vez mayor de recuperación sin empleos.

Mark Zandi, economista en jefe de Moody's Economy.com lo expresó de esta manera: "Vamos de recesión a recuperación, pero al menos al principio no va a sentirse como una". (New York Times, 1 de agosto) La amenaza de un desempleo de doble dígito se acerca y los salarios disminuyen a pesar de la recuperación en el mercado de valores y un repunte en las ganancias corporativas.

### Recuperación sin empleos es problema global

Los/as trabajadores/as deben prestar mucha atención a las palabrerías sobre "recuperación". Es evidente que no les incluyen.

Por ejemplo, leyendo los párrafos enterados en los anuncios de reactivación en Europa y Japón es ilustrativo. Después de pregonar la "fuerte recuperación" de Europa en su titular, el New York Times del 13 de agosto recuerda a sus lectores la posibilidad de que la recuperación podría estancarse.

"El desempleo se espera que aumente considerablemente este año, cuando los programas del gobierno que mantuvieron a la gente en las nóminas privadas por toda Europa comienzan a caducar. Ya la tasa de desempleo de la zona euro se sitúa en el 9,4 por ciento, su nivel más alto en 10 años, y el crecimiento anémico de los

próximos trimestres no será suficiente para detener la caída".

El mismo tipo de titular optimista seguido por el de una mala noticia real apareció en el Times del 16 de agosto: "Sin embargo las perspectivas de Japón aún no están claras, y algunos analistas se preguntan si la economía puede sostener esta recuperación después de que las medidas de estímulo domésticas y en otros lugares se acaben. La caída en empleos y salarios también se espera que pesen sobre los gastos de los consumidores por algún tiempo. La tasa de desempleo de Japón alcanzó un máximo en seis años de 5,4 por ciento y los salarios mostraron una caída récord en junio".

"Una auto-recuperación que pueda sostenerse todavía no está a la vista", declaró un econo-

mista japonés.

En otras palabras, incluso si hay una recuperación de los capitalistas a nivel mundial, para los/as trabajadores/as todavía habrá una crisis de desempleo y disminución de los salarios. Y esa crisis impedirá que el sistema capitalista reviva como antes.

### Aumento de la tasa de explotación agrava la crisis

Una cifra muy importante que se publicó el 11 de agosto pero no se dio a conocer, mostró un incremento en la productividad del trabajo en medio de la crisis. Reuters puso las cosas sin rodeos, al anunciar un incremento del 6,4 por ciento en la producción por hora por trabajador/a (tasa anual).

"La producción por trabajador en EEUU subió a su ritmo más rápido en seis años durante el segundo trimestre ya que las empresas trajeron más producción de menos empleados en una señal de que la recuperación de la recesión será lenta y poco probable de producir un aumento en la contratación".

De modo que los empresarios han utilizado la crisis para despedir trabajadores/as de forma permanente a través del uso de la tecnología, la reorganización, la aceleración o de otras formas más. Lo que esto realmente significa es que los capitalistas han aumentado la tasa de explotación de los/as trabajadores/as.

Las horas trabajadas cayeron un 7,6 por ciento, pero la producción se redujo sólo un 1,7 por ciento. Así, los/as trabajadores/as producen más en menos tiempo. Esto es lo que ha provocado un aumento en las ganancias empresariales a pesar de una economía en declive.

La lucha de cada capitalista para extraer más y más de los/as trabajadores/as significa que la patronal no tendrá que volver a contratar a muchas de las decenas de millones de trabajadores/as sin empleo o subempleados/as, incluso durante una recuperación.

También significa que si hay una recuperación, y esto no está garantizado en absoluto, será débil, de corta vida y llegará a costa de los/as trabajadores/as que se van a encontrar forzados/as a competir entre sí por menos cantidad de puestos de trabajo.

El capitalismo no tiene renovación automática para los/as trabajadores/as. La única manera de revivir las fortunas de los/as trabajadores/as y las comunidades es la apertura de una lucha masiva por empleos, ingresos, servicios sociales, salud, vivienda, alimentación y todas las necesidades de la vida.

Los patrones y los banqueros nos han hecho pagar por esta crisis con miles de millones de dólares en rescates, mientras nos sacan de nuestros trabajos y nuestros hogares.

Es hora de que los/as trabajadores/as organicen para rechazar estas condiciones. Es el momento de declarar que el trabajo es un derecho, la vivienda es un derecho, la atención médica es un derecho, la educación es un derecho. Y es hora de movilizar a los sindicatos, las comunidades y todas las organizaciones de masas en una lucha unitaria para cambiar las cosas.

**ANTES DE LA CUMBRE DEL G-20  
UN LLAMADO A UNIRSE A LA**



**MARCHA NACIONAL PARA DEMANDAR EMPLEOS EN PITTSBURG EL DOMINGO 20 DE SEPT.**

**Reactivemos el sueño del Dr. King de un movimiento para el derecho a un trabajo**

**Si no tiene un empleo, luche por tener uno; si lo tiene, luche por mantenerlo**

**Demandas:**

- Un programa de empleos para TODOS/AS YA!
- Una moratoria en los despidos, ejecuciones de hipotecas y desahucios
- No a los recortes en servicios sociales
- Dinero para las necesidades del pueblo, no para la guerra y la codicia
- No a las ganancias de sistema de salud. Single Payer, Sí! Racismo no!

**SE NECESITAN FONDOS Y VOLUNTARIOS/AS**

Reuniones organizativas todos los miércoles a las 6:30 PM en el Centro de Solidaridad (Solidarity Center) Calle 17 Oeste, núm. 55, 5to piso (entre las avenidas 5ta y 6ta)

**CAJETAS DE CAMPAÑA EN EL "HILL" – del 20-25 de sept.**

**CONTACTO: BAIL OUT THE PEOPLE MOVEMENT (MOVIMIENTO PRO RESCATE DEL PUEBLO)**  
**BailOutPeople.org**  
**PITTSBURGH: 412-780-3813**  
**March4Jobs@gmail.com**  
**NYC: 212-633-6646**  
**Autobuses partirán de NY a las 11:30PM la noche del sábado – boletos 60\$/30\$ para bajos ingresos**